

Light Music Must Be Good.

All good music may not be popular, but all popular music must be good. By that I mean any music that can catch the popular fancy and hold its popularity must have those inherent qualities that constitute good music. It is not necessary that an audience shall leave a place of amusement after hearing music for the first time and whistle it for it to be really popular. In fact, music that can be so easily retained in the memory rarely has the real elements of popularity. As a rule it is as easily forgotten as it was picked up. As an instance of the most popular music, such as "The Bohemian Girl," "The Mikado," etc., music that will be played as long as there are people to listen to it, as long as there are people with ears, is not of the whistling kind. A person hearing either of these operas for the first time would be carried away with the music, but very few would be able to whistle any of it, until it had been heard several times.

The vast majority, as against the select few, that gives to any music the stamp of popularity, as a rule prefer light music, but it is quite as necessary that it be good music, as the most profound oratorio ever written. This, I think, is a point that

many of the best American composers overlook. They seem to think that only the classical is worth while; many of them even go so far as to think the writing of light music degrading and that no one is entitled to be called a composer unless he writes masses, oratorios, fugues, etc. Such music can never become popular, because it appeals to a limited number of people only, and can do no real good in the world, and, after all, that is the true mission of music, and all art, in fact, to uplift and enlighten the world. I believe that good music has an ennobling effect, and, therefore, should be of the kind that will reach the great mass of humanity. Popular music, music that reaches the greatest number of people, must do the greatest good.

All the famous composers of the past, with the possible exception of Wagner, have at times written light music, most of which has become popular. The music of "The Mikado," from the first note in the overture to the last in the finale, is good music, and yet no more popular opera was ever written, and it is all light music. There certainly can be nothing degrading in that kind of music.

I wish some of the good composers would come into this field. That would exclude a certain class of composers, who have never studied and who only have a few jingles in their brain. They only have their chance because the good ones do not think it would comport with their dignity to write light music.—Victor Herbert.

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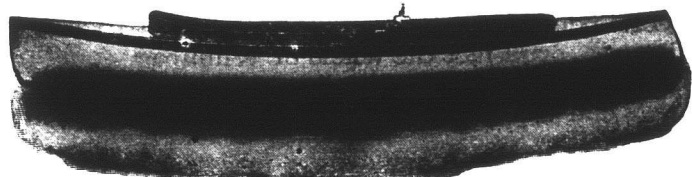
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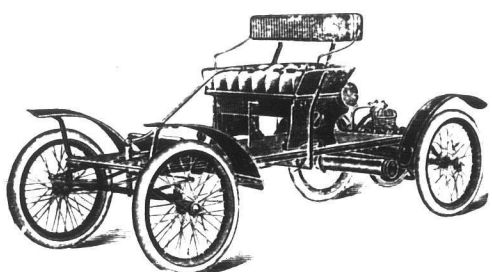
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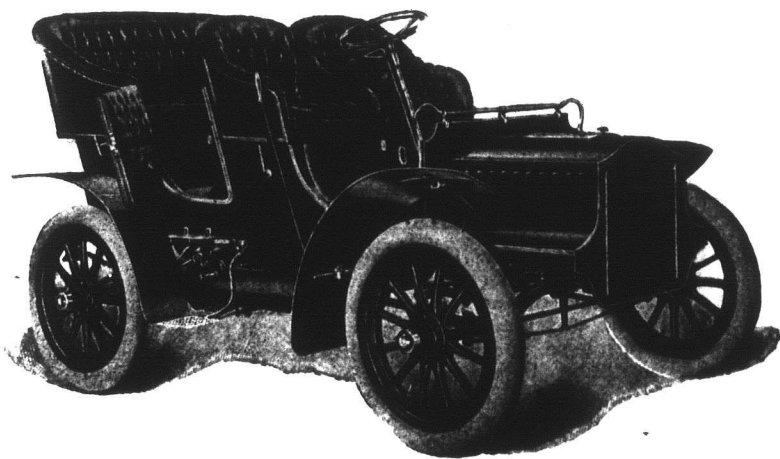
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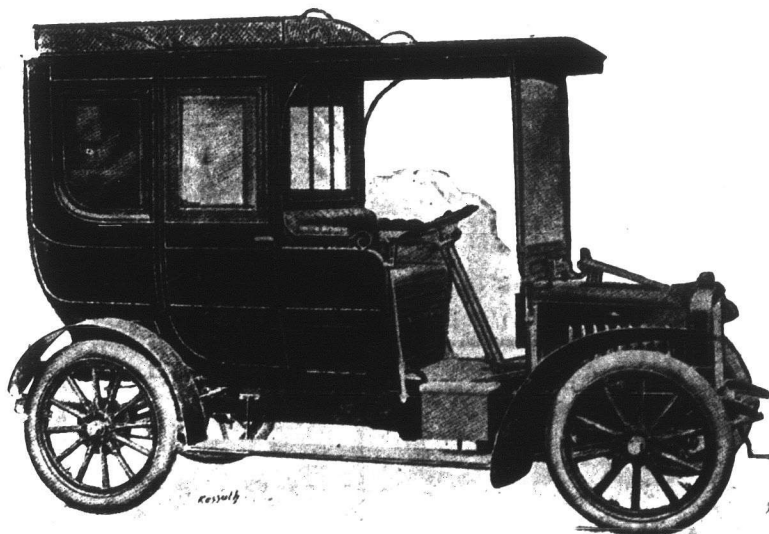
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